



MADELINE MARTIN

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
THE LAST BOOKSHOP IN LONDON

"A stunning story for booklovers to
sink into with all their heart and soul."

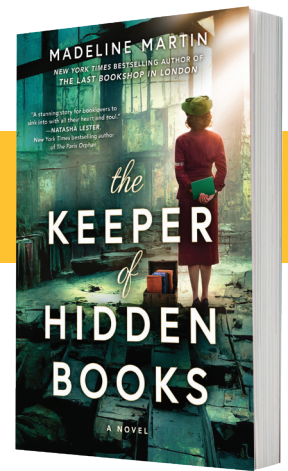
—NATASHA LESTER,
New York Times bestselling author
of *The Paris Orphan*

the
KEEPER
of
HIDDEN
BOOKS

A NOVEL

Discussion Guide

READER QUESTIONS



1. Which character did you connect with the most and why?
2. If you were alive at the time, do you think you could have been part of the Warsaw Uprising?
3. What books read by the Bandit Book Club have you read? Are there any new ones you'd like to read?
4. Zofia initially doesn't like one of the books they read in the Bandit Book Club, but when she reads it again at a later point in her life, she finds incredible poignance in the story. Is there a book you read that you didn't care for at first, but then found significance and power in during a second reading later in your life?
5. What was something interesting you learned about Warsaw during World War II that you didn't know before reading this book?
6. Do you think you'd be part of a secret book club if you were offered membership?
7. If your studies were cut short by the closing of your school during wartime, would you risk your life to finish your education—even if doing so yielded only a ticket and a promise that it would translate to a proper certificate once the war was over?
8. Hiding Jewish people was an incredibly brave—and incredibly dangerous—thing to do. Doing so put the lives of family members and even other apartment dwellers at risk. Do you think you could have helped hide those who were Jewish despite the risk?
9. Sadly, book banning still continues today in our public schools and libraries. Why do you think certain books are banned? What problems do you think can stem from doing so? Have you read any books that were banned? If so, how do you feel about the fact that they were banned?

BOOKS READ BY THE BANDIT BOOK CLUB

The Story of My Life by Helen Keller
The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka
All Quiet on the Western Front
by Erich Maria Remarque
War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy
Les Misérables by Victor Hugo
Teutonic Knights by Henryk Sienkiewicz

The Street of Crocodiles by Bruno Schulz
Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell
The Bridge of San Luis Rey
by Thornton Wilder
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
The Time Machine by H. G. Wells
The Invisible Man by H. G. Wells

Food Suggestions

GOULASH RECIPE



Bread and butter is a great idea, as bread was integral to the survival of the Poles during occupation.

If you want to channel your inner bandit, end the meeting with a shot of vodka.

At this point, I must confess that I'm not the world's best cook. While I loved the sour soup I ate in Warsaw, it requires a sourdough starter to make and that intimidated me. Likewise, pierogies are best made entirely from scratch and that too intimidated me. If you are more skilled in the kitchen than I am, there are tons of great Polish recipes out there.

If you'd like something easy, here's a recipe for goulash—and yes, you can use an Instant Pot.

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 pounds of meat, cut up and trimmed
(I used beef, but they usually use
pork in Poland)
- a plate of flour to dredge the meat into
- 2 chopped onions
- 3 sliced bell peppers cut into strips
- 2 cloves of garlic, diced
(or a squeeze of garlic paste from a tube)
- 14 ounces of beef broth
- 2 tablespoons of tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons of paprika
- 6 whole allspice balls
- ¼ cup of dry red wine
(and a cup for yourself while you cook
if you're so inclined)
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Set Instant Pot to sauté with the olive oil in the pan, or heat oil in a pan at medium heat if cooking without the Instant Pot.
2. Coat meat chunks in flour and cook in oil until browned.
3. Add all other ingredients into the Instant Pot/pan. If using Instant Pot, set to 15-minute cook time. If using a pan, reduce temperature to low and cover to simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. **If you like firmer vegetables, wait to add them until the last 10 minutes of simmer, or throw into Instant Pot after pressure release and cook for an additional minute.
4. Let sit for a few minutes to thicken. If more thickening is needed after 10 minutes or so, add a little more flour.
5. Serve over potatoes.



Food Suggestions

ROASTED POTATOES RECIPE

In Poland, goulash is usually served over potato pancakes. While making these seemed easy enough at first, I didn't have success with them, so I opted for the even easier route of roasted potatoes.



Ingredients:

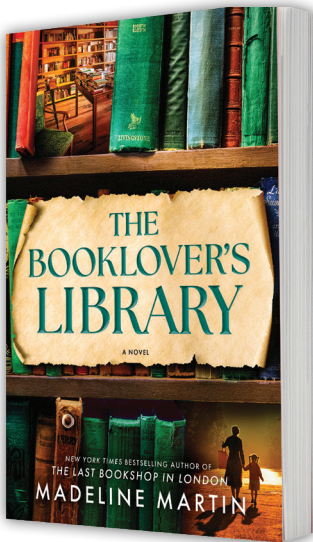
- 4 to 8 large russet potatoes
- pan spray
- olive oil
- salt

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Peel and dice potatoes.
3. Spray baking dish with pan spray.
4. Drizzle olive oil over potatoes and sprinkle with salt. Stir to coat evenly.
5. Bake for about 20 to 30 minutes until reaching desired texture.

I took this picture before I let the sauce thicken; while it isn't the prettiest picture of goulash ever taken, it was delicious!

Don't miss Madeline Martin's next heartwarming story, *The Booklover's Library*, on-sale August 27, 2024!



In the tranquil rural town of Nottingham, England, widow Emma Taylor finds herself in desperate need of a job. She and her beloved daughter Olivia have always managed just fine on their own, but with shadows of war on the horizon and the legal restrictions prohibiting widows from most employment opportunities, she's left with only one option: persuading the manageress at Boots' Booklover's Library to take a chance on her with a job.

Then the unthinkable happens: as England prepares to enter the war, Olivia must be evacuated to the countryside. As the Blitz intensifies in Nottingham and Emma fights to reunite with her daughter, she must learn to depend on her community and the power of literature more than ever to find hope in the darkest of times.